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WHAT SHALL BE DONE ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES?

BY MAYO W. HAZELTINE.

IN pursuance of the protocol, to which the United States and Spain were parties, the ten plenipotentiaries composing the Hispano-American Commission will meet this month in Paris and endeavor to arrive at an agreement concerning the disposition to be made of the Philippines. If an agreement be reached, it will be embodied in a treaty, together with the other conditions of peace set forth in the protocol, and this treaty will bind the executives of the two countries. That this is fully understood by Mr. McKinley and that he personally has no idea of recurring to war, whatever may be the decision of the Commission, is evident from the fact that he has already given orders for the disbandment of 100,000 volunteers. The treaty will not, however, acquire validity until it has been sanctioned by the Cortes, without the assent of which no Spanish territory can be alienated, and until it has been also ratified by two-thirds of the United States Senate. Such a ratification may be looked for, even though the terms of peace may be unacceptable to many Senators. The Senate has rejected treaties, but never a treaty of peace. The Treaty of Ghent failed to redress a single one of the grievances which had been proclaimed the causes of the War of 1812; nevertheless, it

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was accepted by the Senate. The treaty which brought to a close the war with Mexico in 1848 was also ratified by the Senate, though it had only three votes to spare; in this case opposition was due to the complaint not that we secured too little, but that we secured too much, and it was parried by an expedient to which we shall presently refer. We may, consequently, take for granted that the Senate will confirm the agreement of the Hispano-American Commission, if any be arrived at, but what the agreement will be is, at present, a matter of conjecture. The very creation of the Commission is proof that Mr. McKinley, at the time when the protocol was signed, had not made up his mind what to do about the Philippines, and that he still remained undetermined as late as Sept. 10, seems a fair inference from his selection of plenipotentiaries. Of the five American Commissioners, two—Senator Davis and Senator Frye—are known to be favorable to the annexation of the whole Philippine archipelago; a third, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, is believed to take similar ground; Judge Day, on the other hand, is understood to have held formerly, if he does not still hold, that we should confine ourselves to securing a coaling station, while Senator Gray is known to have argued and voted against the annexation of Hawaii, and is, therefore, presumably, opposed to the acquisition of dependencies even more remote. We may assume, however, that all the Commissioners would not have accepted the trust reposed in them unless they were prepared to obey the President's final instructions. Those instructions will probably be framed in accordance with what Mr. McKinley believes, at the last moment, to be the prevailing opinion of the country. Public opinion is now well advanced in the process of taking definite shape, after widespread and prolonged discussion, which has been, or should be, directed to two questions, namely, first, what should we wish to do about the Philippines; and, secondly, what are we able to do, in view of the situation created by the protocol? The second question is no less important than the other, although many of our newspapers overlook it altogether and talk as if we were still at liberty to deal with the Philippines as we please; whereas, had such been the President's opinion, he would have announced it as peremptorily as he did the demand for the cession of Porto Rico, and would not have relegated the solution of the Philippine problem to a Commission.

I.

Two or three months ago, the President's uncertainty regarding the course to be pursued in the Philippines was shared by many of his countrymen. Neither in its moral nor in its economical aspects had the problem been thoroughly examined. There is no doubt that those who organized a conference at Saratoga for the purpose of considering the questions opened by the war, expected therefrom a declaration that, by the teaching and practice of the fathers, we were precluded from seeking any transmarine possessions, and, especially, such as were parted from us by the breadth of the Pacific. As a matter of fact, so rapid was the diffusion of information and the resultant evolution of opinion, that the Saratoga Conference pronounced in favor of annexing not only Porto Rico, but also a port in the Ladrones and the whole, or part, of the Philippines. There is now reason to believe that a large majority of our citizens are thoroughly convinced, first, that, by our victory at Cavite, and the subsequent capture of Manila, we assumed a moral obligation toward the natives of Luzon; secondly, that the obligation can be best discharged by the occupation of all the Philippines, and, thirdly, that no grievous financial burden will be imposed upon our people by the discharge of that obligation, seeing that the natural resources of the Philippines are incalculably great, and that our occupation of them will give us a voice potential in the future regulation of China's trade, wherein we are profoundly interested.

From the viewpoint of these prevalent convictions, let us glance at the several ways in which it has been suggested by the various advisers of the President that the Philippine problem shall be solved. Shall we restore the whole of the Philippines to Spain, retaining only for ourselves a station for coaling and repair, as, for example, the city and harbor of Manila? This we cannot do without forfeiting our self-respect and the respect of the world, for the natives of Luzon, the most populous and civilized island in the group, have notoriously suffered more at the hands of Spain than have the Cubans, and we are ourselves responsible for the latest uprising on their part. Moreover, what Spain could not do, when she had a considerable navy and funds relatively adequate, she certainly could not accomplish now that her navy is well nigh extinct and that her

treasury is bankrupt; that is to say, establish in the island of Luzon a government which should fulfill the fundamental functions of safeguarding life and property. We may dismiss with a word the fantastic proposal that we should govern Luzon in partnership with Spain. Such a mongrel administration would compel us to share the responsibility for evil doing, while depriving us of power to avert it; Spanish influence, so far as a joint régime permitted its exercise, would be sure to follow the old channels of oppression and embezzlement. Shall we, then, declare the island of Luzon independent, and make over the control of it to Aguinaldo and his followers? It is the consensus of all observers, who have studied at first hand the situation in Luzon, that the Tagals could not establish a durable government of their own. They are an industrious people, docile and easily managed by an administration at once firm and just, but they are very far from possessing the qualifications for self-rule. Shall we, by resigning our own claim to the Philippines, a claim which, being based upon our capture of their capital, was, when the news of the signing of the protocol reached Manila, actually stronger than our claim to Cuba or to Porto Rico, enable Spain to sell them to Russia, France or Germany? By such an act, we should endow with an inestimable coign of vantage in the Far East one of the powers, the whole tendency of whose policy is to minimize our share in China's foreign trade. But Spain, it may be argued, could find a purchaser in Great Britain. We answer that, by the acquisition of the Philippines, Great Britain would acquire the prospect of such preponderance in the Far East that the other powers would feel constrained, by a sense of self-preservation, to avert it by a general war. Our duty to mankind enjoins us not to precipitate a general war, and the surest mode of discharging that duty is to take the Philippines ourselves.

Could we not, however, surmount all difficulties by keeping Luzon, which represents in area rather more than a third of the group, and leaving the rest of the islands to Spain, a promise being exacted from her that they shall not be ceded to any other power? This solution of the problem is said to be favored in influential quarters, but it is open to grave objections. In the first place, it is doubtful if Spain would be able to maintain peace and order in the rest of the archipelago, and, thereby af-

ford no pretext for foreign intervention. Even when her navy was relatively strong, it was only with difficulty that she was able to repress the pirates, who formerly infested the coasts of Mindanao and the islands of the Sulu group. Suppose, however, that, in the remnant of her possessions, she did contrive to maintain a naval force sufficient for police purposes and gradually did manage to develop a flourishing island empire, we should have at our doors a vindictive neighbor ready to join any coalition that might be formed against us, and, meanwhile, eager to foment disaffection in Luzon, which her profession of a common religion and her familiarity with the customs and the character of the Tagals would facilitate. By such a compromise, in short, we should only invite future trouble, which we can avoid by assuming control of the whole archipelago. The civilizing of the southern islands, which have, collectively, a superficies of about 75,000 square miles, would be a trivial task to the American people, which, in less than a century, has reclaimed the vast region lying between the Mississippi and the Pacific.

From an economic as well as a humanitarian viewpoint, the work would be worth its cost, for, at the end of a century, the whole Philippine group should be able to support fifty millions of inhabitants, if we may judge by the experience of Java, which, in the course of a hundred years, has seen its population expand from about two to over twenty millions. If it be true, as Mr. Benjamin Kidd contends, that the twentieth century is to witness a vehement struggle for the control of tropical lands upon the part of the nations belonging to the temperate zones, we should enter upon the contest with one of the most valuable prizes attainable in the tropics already in our hands. Nor is it only by their natural resources, capable, as they are, of almost limitless development, nor by the capacious market for our manufactures which they would, eventually, offer, that the Philippines would be of immense utility to the United States. Such is their strategic relation to China that our possession of them would give us an influence at Peking second only to that of Russia and Great Britain, an influence that we could use to thwart such of the European powers as contemplate a thorough-going partition of the Middle Kingdom, and to co-operate effectively with those that are resolved to uphold what is left of China's territorial integrity and to keep at all events an open door to that most popu-

lous and resourceful section of the Celestial Empire which is watered by the Yang-tse-Kiang. It is, in a word, freedom of access for American manufacturers to the best part of China which would be powerfully furthered by our retention of the Philippines.

II.

To the first question, then, What should we wish to do about the Philippines? we answer that we ought to keep not only Manila, not only the whole island of Luzon, but the entire Philippine archipelago, if we are to show ourselves alive to the full purport of our opportunities and to the full scope of our mission in the East. That would be the simplest, safest and cheapest solution of the problem. Is it, however, any longer possible to secure all the Philippines in the new situation created by the protocol?

There is no doubt that President McKinley, before that agreement was signed, could have obtained the Philippines well nigh as easily as he obtained Porto Rico and Cuba, for Manila was known to be upon the point of falling into our hands, which is more than could be said for either San Juan or Havana. Had the Madrid Government proved recalcitrant upon this point, it could have been quickly brought to terms by naval demonstrations against the Carolines, the Canaries, the Balearic Isles and the seaports of the Iberian peninsula. But, when the President forbore to exercise the power which he possessed, and consented to let the fate of the Philippines be determined by a commission, in which Spain should have an equal voice, he, practically, put the retention of all the islands by us out of the question, unless some consideration should be tendered, which would be regarded in Madrid as a *quid pro quo*. For suppose that, in compliance with instructions from Washington, the five American commissioners should concur in demanding the cession to us of all the Philippines, it is absolutely certain that the five Spanish commissioners would, on their part, reject the demand, unless it were coupled with an offer of compensation. We could not blame them for an attitude which must, or should have been, foreseen when the protocol was signed. It is even questionable whether the Spanish commissioners will agree to surrender the whole of the island of Luzon in the absence of any indemnifying proposal. In that event, it may be said, the result of the negotiations will be a

deadlock, and, if this cannot be broken, both parties will be relegated to the arbitrament of war. We answer that the public opinion of the world would not justify us in recurring to the arbitrament of war after the solution of the Philippine problem had been formally committed by our Executive to a joint commission. We should be told, justly, that if our President was resolved to keep the Philippines, or at least Luzon, he ought, when the protocol was signed, to have proclaimed his resolution as distinctly as he did in the case of Porto Rico, and that, unless we could and would replace Spain in the position occupied by her when hostilities ceased, we should have no right to recur to war, merely because the Spanish commissioners saw fit to exercise the equal voice which the protocol conferred on them. This is indisputably true. Our Government has, voluntarily, made the disposition of the Philippines a subject for negotiation, and it could not, with any show of decency, make a deadlock the pretext for a recourse to arms.

When the President begins to ponder the methods of escaping from the predicament in which the protocol has placed him, he will find a suggestive precedent in the treatment which Mexico received at the hands of President Polk in 1848. At that time General Scott occupied the Mexican capital, and the entire Mexican republic was undeniably at our mercy. We might have annexed the whole of it, but public opinion in the Northern States would not have tolerated such a sweeping exercise of the right of conquest; indeed, it was even indisposed to brook an extensive mutilation of a sister commonwealth. Under these circumstances, it was decided that, although we had demonstrated the possession of a giant's strength, we would not use it like a giant, and our commissioners were instructed not to exact from Mexico a single acre by right of conquest, but to offer \$15,000,000 in cash and the assumption of debts amounting to \$3,000,000 due from Mexico to American citizens, in exchange for the tract comprising California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. The purchase money now seems ludicrously small, but it was eagerly accepted by the provisional Mexican Government, the full extent of the mineral wealth of the ceded territory being, as yet, unguessed at. The result of this remarkable transaction, which, so far as we know, has no counterpart in history, and which presents a striking contrast to the treatment of France by Germany in 1871, dis-

armed, in a considerable degree, the opposition of our Northern States to the dismemberment of Mexico, and the treaty of peace was ratified by the Senate.

The bearing of this precedent upon the situation created by the protocol is obvious. It is most improbable that, without some compensation, the Spanish commissioners will agree to give up the Philippines, or even the island of Luzon. On the other hand, the maintenance of their authority in the rest of the islands would require an outlay of blood and treasure which they are ill able to afford. The Madrid Government could escape from the dilemma, and, to use the Chinese phrase, "save its face" in the eyes of the Spanish people, if, in return for a cession of all the Philippines, it could secure such a sum of money as would, to a moderate extent, relieve the necessities of its exchequer. As it happens, a relatively insignificant part of the Spanish debt is saddled upon the revenues of the Philippines. This our commissioners might consent to assume, and they might even go a little further, and agree to make the United States, or Independent Cuba, responsible for a fifth part of the so-called Cuban debt. Why do we designate this particular fraction? Because, when the Autonomist government was instituted in Cuba, it was stipulated by the Autonomists that the insular revenues should be liable for only a fifth of the Cuban debt, inasmuch as by the most liberal estimate not more than a fifth of the money borrowed in Cuba's name could be regarded as having been applied to the welfare of the island. The Philippine debt and one-fifth of the Cuban debt would not, together, amount to much more than \$100,000,000, a sum which we could borrow at three per cent., or, for that matter, easily spare from our national revenue, distended as this has been by the war taxes. We opine that an offer on our part to assume the indebtedness mentioned would secure the assent of the Spanish commissioners to the relinquishment of all the Philippines, and we doubt if their assent to such a proposal can be gained in any other way.

But why, it may be asked, should we buy what we have conquered? We answer that the question comes too late. It should have been put before the signing of the protocol, whereby in the disposition of the Philippines the Spaniards acquired an equal voice.

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